for the imposition of sanctions against foreign companies that make an investment of more than US $ 20 million in one year in Iran's energy sector. The Government is pursuing the import of natural gas from Iran in national interest in order to meet the energy requirements of the country. During the recent meeting between Mr. Samuel W. Bodman, US Secretary of Energy with Minister (Petroleum & Natural Gas), he was informed that India was free to pursue its energy option with any country and would act independently to pursue its interest. At present discussions are continuing amongst Iran, Pakistan and India for resolution of various contentious issues involved. Government has not made any budget allocation for the project. From Indian side, the Indian Oil Sector PSUs involved with the project, would provide necessary funds for the project. GAIL (India) Ltd. has spent Rs. 3.5 crore (Approx.) on the Technical & Financial consultants appointed for the project.

Supply of petroleum products to Nepal

3619. SHRI DEVDAS APTE: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have decided to cut supplies of petroleum products to Nepal;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) how much loss the Indian Oil Corporation has incurred due to political turmoil in Nepal; and

(d) what steps Government are taking to recover the loss and to continue " goodwill ties with the Government of Nepal?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI DINSHAJ. PATEL): (a) No, Sir

(b) Does not arise.

(c) and (d) IOC has reported that it has not suffered any loss on account of political turmoil in Nepal.

Regulator for natural gas pricing

3620. SHRI NANDI YELLAIAH. Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the' Ministry has received any proposal from the State Government of Andhra Pradesh for appointing a Statutory Regulator for pricing of domestically produced natural gas and not to effect any increase in the current gas price of US Dollar 3.3 per MMBU for deep sea gas;

(b) if so, the details in this regard;

(c) the reasons for delay in clearing the above said proposal; and

(d) by when this proposal is likely to be given clearance?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI DINSHA J PATEL): (a) to (d) Yes, Sir, A request from Government of Andhra Pradesh has been received to establish a market regulator for upstream gas pricing.

Under New Exploration Licensing Policy (NELP), Production Sharing Contracts (PSCs) the contractor has freedom to market the gas at market related prices. PSCs are legally binding contracts, which have been signed pursuant to the transparent NELP approved by the Government.

Waiting list for new LPG connections

3621. SHRI NANDI YELLAIAH: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that as on 1st November, 2006,11,912 applicants for new LPG connection were in the waiting list;

(b) if so, whether this situation has improved in the meantime;

(c) the number of such applicants in the latest waiting list; and

(d) the time likely to be taken to clear the waiting list for new LPG connections?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI DINSHA J. PATEL): (a) and (b) Public Sector Oil Marketing Companies (OMCs) have reported that there was a waiting list of 63543 for release of new LPG connections in the country as on 1st November, 2006, The above waiting list has been liquidated by March, 2007.